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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3974

INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:PDUSDP/ISA:EUR/ISA:NESA/DSCA// PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY

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RHMFIASS/425ABS IZMIR TU//CC// PRIORITY

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RHMFIASS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU PRIORITY

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S E C R E T ANKARA 002510

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ANKARA PASS TO ADANA

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/10/2017

TAGS: PTER MOPS ASEC PREL IZ TU

SUBJECT: TURKEY: INTENSIFIED COUNTER-TERROR ACTIVITY IN SOUTHEAST BUT NO INDICATIONS OF LARGE SCALE OPERATION

REF: A. ANKARA 2500

1B. ANKARA 2503

1C. ANKARA 2504

Classified By: DCM Nancy McEldowney for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (S) Summary: Local press reports describe Turkish counter-terror security operations currently underway against the PKK in the Southeast as the most extensive in recent years, following attacks which killed 13 Turkish soldiers on October 7 (ref a). However, there is no evidence of a military build-up near Habur Gate on the Iraqi border which would indicate an imminent major ground cross-border operation. October 10 DAO reporting indicates no unusual activity at the Turkish Special Forces Brigade stationed at Silopi. PM Erdogan has announced that the government will send a bill to the parliament requesting approval for the Turkish military to conduct a cross-border operation (CBO) if and when such an operation is deemed necessary. End Summary.

12. (S) DAO reporting from Silopi indicates normal activity at the Habur Gate, the main road crossing from Turkey to Iraq and a likely location from which a major ground-based cross-border operation might be launched. Operations at the Special Forces Brigade Headquarters in Silopi were reported to be ordinary, with no combat preparations in evidence and no increase in military traffic on the road to Habur Gate.

13. (SBU) The flow of commercial truck traffic from Turkey into Iraq through Habur Gate was at near normal levels on October 10, with 726 vehicles crossing into Iraq in the 24-hour period beginning October 9. The truck backlog on the Turkish side of the border has dropped from over 4,500 on October 3 to 1,700 on October 10.

14. (S) Sensitive reporting supports press accounts that Turkish artillery fired across the border at a number of locations east of Silopi in the early morning hours of October 8. We have seen no reports of casualties or damage. The firing fits a pattern of cross-border artillery attacks conducted by Turkey over the past four months and was directed at sparsely populated areas, causing minimal damage and no reported casualties.

15. (S) PM Erdogan has stated that, following the Oct 11-14 Bayram holiday marking the end of Ramazan, the government will seek parliamentary authorization to conduct cross-border operations when and if necessary. While hot-pursuit incursions and cross-border artillery fire may occur at any time, a coordinated CBO would likely be preceded by formal parliamentary approval.

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